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ABSTRACT

Four viewpoints on teacher centers are presented. (1) teacher centers in the context of inservice education, current models and possibilities for success; (2) reservations and attitudes of school district superintendents; (3) the Utah Education Association's position on governance and organization of teacher centers; and (4) the State Board of Education's stand on the concept of teacher centers, their financing, initiation, and evaluation. (JD)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

Eleventh Annual Conference
on Teacher Education

ARE TEACHER CENTERS THE ANSWER?

Held at

Brigham Young University

April 14, 1978

Sponsored by

The Utah State Board of Education
Walter D. Talbot, Superintendent

in cooperation with

The Association of Teacher Educators
Utah Unit

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Table of Contents

Forward i

Introduction ii

Consultants 1

Consultant Presentations

Robert Erdman. 2

Dan Peterson 5

Lowell Baum 10

LaMar Allred 18

Summary of the Discussion Groups 24

Foreword

For the past eleven years the Utah State Board of Education in cooperation with the Utah Unit of the Association of Teacher Educators has sponsored a conference addressing a current issue in teacher education. The purpose of the annual meetings is to bring together Utah educators representing all areas of the profession for a high level exchange of ideas. This year's conference was no exception. Under the able direction of Dr. Clark Webb, Utah Association of Teacher Educators president, and Dr. Caseel Burke, Program Chairman, an excellent agenda was carried out, highlighted by a panel of Utah educators discussing the topic of teacher centers.

Because of the interest in the topic both in Utah and nationally, and because of the high quality of the presentations, it was decided to reproduce the proceedings for the benefit of the participants. Hopefully they will be of value to those who take the time to review them.

Dr. Roger Mouritsen
Utah State Board of Education

Introduction

When the U/ATE program committee, under the direction of Caseel Burke, proposed a Spring Conference on the theme of teacher centers, the executive committee of U/ATE was not prepared for the commotion that would be made by various educational groups around the state became aware of the conference. We learned that we were proposing to deal with a controversial issue indeed.

Whereas our aim was to provide a forum for intelligent discussion of a current educational reality, some educators were concerned that U/ATE might simply be making a propaganda move to "sell" teacher centers to the Utah educational community.

For a time it appeared that the uncertainty about our motives would threaten even the attendance at the conference. As it turned out, of course, a substantial number of educators did attend and we did adhere to our original purpose of thoughtful examination of an educational issue.

That we achieved this goal was due in significant measure to the excellence of the presentations made by the invited consultants: LaMar Allred, Coordinator of Inservice Education, Utah State Board of Education; Lowell Baum, Utah Education Association; Robert Erdman, Dean, Graduate School of Education, University of Utah; Dan Peterson, Superintendent, Alpine School District. Their remarks were thoughtful, sensitive and frank without being hostile.

As some of us listened to those presentations, we felt that publication and dissemination of the ideas they contained would be a service to the teaching profession of Utah. Hence the present Proceedings.

Inasmuch as not all of the light (nor the heat) has yet been generated which will ultimately result from discussion of this issue--teacher

centers--I suggest the following two points to consider when the subject comes up:

First....."We tend to speak, or feel we should speak, of teacher centers as if they had precise operational meaning--as if the completed blueprints and technology were available for the building of this uniquely new institution. . . We need to acknowledge that both the blueprints and the technology of teacher centers are in the emergent state; that the teacher center concept is not totally new and unique in the history of preservice and inservice education and, finally, that 'teacher center' is a multidimensional construct for which there is not one definition but only emphases and preferences."[1]

Second.... the characteristics I attributed to the presenters at the conference--thoughtfulness, sensitivity, and frankness without hostility--perhaps should be those we would adopt as we chart Utah's educational course with respect to this issue.

Dr. Clark Webb
Brigham Young University

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[1] Bruce R. Joyce and Marsha Weil, "Concepts of Teacher Centers." ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, May 1973, #SP 006 003, p.1.

C O N S U L T A N T S

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TEACHER CENTERS IN THE CONTEXT OF INSERVICE EDUCATION

Robert L. Erdman, Dean
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1. Initial assumption: education is a profession; educators, regardless of role, are members of this profession.

   1.1 Evidence suggests we are a profession divided.

      1.11 Our common desire to be a profession has resulted in a power struggle that appears to result in the reality that someone has to win and someone has to lose.

      1.12 Suggestion: We need a redefinition of our common purposes--a creed to which all so-called professional educators subscribe--the values that bind us together as a profession.

      1.13 Professional educators, regardless of role, are experiencing rapid role redefinition (internal and external forces).

         1.113 The consequence is the diffusion of role clarity and responsibility; we have lost sight of the contributions each role can make to the totality of a profession.

      1.14 We have resorted to use of power through legislative mandates rather than to capitalize on the concept of faith in our own inherent values; faith in a belief that we ourselves can govern without outside reliance on superimposed bodies.

         1.114 The consequence is that although we claim to be professionals, we may be destroying the very values we verbally, but not always behaviorally, proclaim.

2. The education of professional educators (regardless of assignment and role) is a lifetime process; it begins upon entry and continuesuntil retirement; it involves all in the profession regardless of role, e.g., teachers, superintendents, deans,

state department personnel.

2.1 The goals of preservice and inservice education are not discrete but should be part of a continuum.

2.2 The dilemma is that we as a profession are unsure or are unwilling to proclaim what bodies of knowledge, skills, etc., are required, and to what depth; the range of belief is from technician orientation by on-the-job preparation to those that suggest a doctorate is required; degrees and certificates may have become artifacts clouding the issue of competency as a professional, or what constitutes a profession. We are unsure of the process of socialization required for professional entry and maintenance of professional personnel.

2.3 CBTE as one contemporary example is not a panacea for all our ills. Until we realize that we have not achieved a maturity level of scientific knowledge, compared to some other disciplines, we must cautiously evaluate contemporary fads and trends and assure that we don't confuse value judgments with scientific evidence; each trend may have a legitimate role, but we as a profession need to more clearly distinguish when each is appropriate and applicable.

3. Some assumptions higher education needs to reexamine concerning the concept of inservice education.

3.1 Inservice is as legitimate an activity as preservice; recognition of this reality in higher education needs to be established and reinforced.

3.2 Adult learning styles are similar to those of younger learners.

3.3 The goals of inservice and graduate study may not and probably should not be synonomous.

3.4 Inservice education cannot be an additive factor to an already crowded work schedule. It must be an integral part of work load definition.

3.5 Courses = credits = dollars = competition = entrepreneurship.

4. Teacher centers as proposed are only one form for the delivery of inservice education. I believe their success will be no greater than other current models unless:

   4.1 Every effort is made to operate with concepts of diagnosis and prescription; anything less than that will result only in tinkering with the symptoms.

   4.2 Every effort is made to deal with individual needs of teachers as contrasted to the so-called "shotgun" approach of what we think groups will need; while both approaches may be desirable, a least a careful balance should be sought.

   4.3 Every effort is made to make teacher centers truly collaborative in a professional sense and we minimize the question of power for control; currently there is little incentive for higher education involvement.

   4.4 Every effort is made to relate theory and practice; unless both components are present we will be able to discern neither what is nor what should be.

   4.5 Every effort is made to utilize the centers for facilitating the continued growth of new teachers as related to specific role expectations of a specific school system.

ARE TEACHER CENTERS THE ANSWER?

Dr. Dan W. Peterson
Superintendent
Alpine School District

You probably will be interested in knowing how I was selected to be on this symposium this morning. The committee in charge of the program asked the Society of Superintendents and its executive secretary, Lynn Bennion, to appoint a superintendent to represent the 40 superintendents in this discussion. All of you should be aware that no one man or group of men can represent the 40 superintendents of the state. Each one is an individual in his own right and each one has his own thoughts on any subject that is brought before him.

I have noted recently that Dr. Bennion has assigned the pleasant tasks of the Society to the other superintendents and the tough problems he has given to me. This particular assignment is tough because the Society of Superintendents was informed that I would be assigned to represent them. To make sure that I represented them fairly and adequately, they sent me here with instructions on what I should say. It was the unanimous opinion of the superintendents that they opposed teacher centers at this point in time. I shall come back to their reasons for opposing teacher centers a little later in my remarks.

A few months ago, I sat having dinner with half a dozen leading educators of the nation in San Francisco. Dr. Wilson Riles, State Superintendent in California, was giving us his views on what was wrong with public education in the United States today. One of his statements was: "If we don't improve the educational system in the United States, within the next 25 years there will be no public education system."

This statement to a semi-rural farm boy from Utah was indeed shocking. It did cause me to reflect very seriously, however, on what is right and what is wrong with public education today. It led me to think that perhaps much was wrong in the governance of education today and that perhaps much was wrong with the teaching in the public schools today.

For the last quarter of a century, since I have been in public school administration, it appears to me that there has been an erosion of

local control of education. The erosion has come about from several different sources.

The Federal government's increasing role in financing education and its subsequent role in controlling education has been a great concern to all of us.

When I refer to the Federal government, I refer not only to the legislators which we send to Washington, D. C., but to the bureaucracy there which provides the operational guidelines for the laws enacted by Congress. Not only does one group provide the guidelines for all federal laws but another group of "untouchable" bureaucrats interpret and enforce the guidelines.

Local school districts have been in a position where they felt they needed small amounts of Federal financial aid so badly that they accepted the dollars and had imposed upon them guidelines which tend to control our local schools. Quite often these federal guidelines are not are not only related to the programs for which the dollars have been provided but they spill over into many of our other educational programs.

Finis Engleman, former executive secretary of the American Association of School Administrators, in commenting on Bill 94-142 -- Education for the Handicapped -- wrote, "Those who are given responsibility for administering and executing its provisions will have little flexibility and will be robots in a major sense."

Each time a new program comes out of Washington, those of us who have to administer the program are very skeptical of accepting the money because of the restrictions that will be placed upon us by that acceptance.

This information is preface to the reasons why the forty superintendents of the state oppose the concept of teacher centers. If I am "reading" them correctly in their opposition to teacher centers, their reasons are varied because the background of the superintendents varies. We might list their opposition as follows:

1. They are uninformed, as are many of us, in terms of what teacher centers really are. I have read all of the literature that has been made available to me on teacher centers and I find that not only do

the superintendents not understand what is meant by teacher centers, but even the so-called experts in the field are not sure what a teacher center actually is. I have been a member of the Board of Directors of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research for several years. During the period of time that I have been on the board, the Far West Lab, under the direction of Kathleen Devaney, has been most active under grants from the Office of Education in studying teacher centers. Even Kathleen does not clearly state to me what a teacher center is, and even her book entitled, Essays On Teachers' Centers, and her essay entitled, "Surveying Teachers' Centers," do not have in them a definition of what a teacher center is.

2. Superintendents and school board members, having recently lost so much of the control of public education to the federal and state governments, are fearful that they will lose further control of the local educational system if the concept of teacher centers is made a vital part of the educational program.

As you know, a policy board for each teacher center must be established and at least 51 per cent of the members must be teachers. The control then of a vital part of the educational program is vested with the teachers and not with the board of education which supposedly represents the views of the people who pay the taxes for the support of education. In addition, every university that contributes to teacher education in a given area must be represented on the policy board. This probably means that in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, for example, where there are 17 universities that train teachers, that each of these universities must be represented on the board and yet a majority of the board members must be teachers. It appears that a policy board in the Baltimore area would be so large that it could not function effectively. In our area, there are six universities that provide teachers to our district. The policy board governing a teacher center in our area would not be as large as it is in Baltimore, but it would probably be too large to be effective.

3. The teacher centers concept, by demanding that 51 per cent of the members of the board be teachers and therefore that only a relatively small number of administrators can serve on a board, seems to downgrade the role of the board of education and the administrator. In Kathleen Devaney's essay surveying teachers' centers, she indicates very strongly the role of the teacher on the board while only tolerating

the presence of administrators. I should like to read just one sentence from her essay.

"The law's provision for teachers to be in the majority on a center's supervisory board appears to constitute a requirement that the teacher center should be independent from the line organization of the school district."

Most administrators are in their administrative position because sometime in the past they have been excellent teachers. It is the opinion of most administrators that they do not change their role as a teacher because they have a new assignment in the educational program of their local school district.

4. Other members of the group of superintendents are not willing to accept, at this time, hours spent in a teacher center for changes on the lanes on salary schedules. It would have to be proved to the superintendents and the board members that the type of work that comes out of a teacher center is equivalent to college credit which is generally about the only type of credit that is recognized for lane change. Most administrators conscientiously feel that the accepting of teacher center credit for lane changes would down-grade the salary schedule.

5. Many administrators feel that the State Board of Education has already gone too far in changing its recertification requirements. Recertification credit is granted in many school districts for relatively insignificant educational activities. The superintendents, while recognizing that recertification is a state problem, would not be willing to accept teacher center activities as equivalent to university training at this point in time.

The five items which I have just called to your attention represent for the most part the reasons why the superintendents instructed me to tell you that, at this time, they did not favor the concept of teacher centers.

Recently, in Atlanta, Georgia, I heard Charles Lovit, of the U.S. Office of Education, talk on teacher centers. He may be the most informed person in the nation at this time on the legal aspects of the law governing teacher centers. As I listened to him speak for an hour, I gathered from him just a few basic concepts. They have

all been brought out before but I feel they are worth repeating.

1. For this year we have only 8.2 million dollars with which to work.

2. There will be far more applications for the 8.2 million dollars than can be funded.

3. The major target of the program is those teachers who are displaced by declining enrollments and for updating teachers on new curriculums.

4. There are no guidelines on how a center should relate to a school district and to the State Board of Education.

5. There are no guidelines for the governance and the content of c teacher centers.

While I have studied for several years the whole concept of teacher centers and have, over the last two months, made a special effort to become more familiar with the centers because of this assignment, I must assure you that there are so many questions in my mind concerning teacher centers that I could not, in good conscience, feel comfortable with having teacher centers in our area other than on an experimental basis.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TEACHER CENTERS

Lowell Baum
Staff Associate
Utah Education Association

Since the Congress enacted and the President signed the Amendmends of 1976 (Public Law 94-482), which authorized as much as $68 million a year for three years for teacher centers, there has been a good deal of speculation, discussion and investigation about teacher centers.

Kathy Devaney, director of the Teacher Center Exchange, suggests: "Over the past decade, a nationwide group of American educators has developed the idea of a small, informal, sometimes independent, sometimes district- or university-sponsored work place where teachers go on their own intitiative to work on curriculum for their own classroom. They work with the help of practical minded professors or master teachers and with each other, largely in the spirit of colleagues exchanging, rather than experts training."

What does a teacher center look like?

What goes on in a teacher center?

It would be impossible to make a single summary statement that would would describe teacher centers because each "poineer"--the inde-perdent district teacher centers which have been developed over the past ten years--embodies unique resources, and attempts to fulfill unique needs, has its individual character. Some of these centers serve whole school districts, others serve only one school or segment of the district.

Some of the centers charge a fee or sell a membership, some use federal categorical funding, many are built, at least partially, into school district budgets.

Some centers are general in subject matter focus, some concentrate on a single subject, such as math, science, etc. Some are characterized less by their place then by their staff--advisors or teachers who work in a non-supervisory style at a teacher's request to enrich classroom curriculum or instructional repertoire.

Kathy Devaney describes a composite center as follows:

Setting: Several classrooms of an old school classed as a fire trap.

Facilities: Workroom for teachers to copy individualized lesson cards and learning games from displays of curriculum ideas that have worked for other teachers; carpentry shop where teachers learn to make their own math and science "concrete-manipulative" materials, and to construct wood or tri-wall cardboard bookshelves, cubbies, workbenches for children in informal classrooms; plants and small animals in habitats to take into the classroom; darkroom for developing teachers' and children's photographs; potter's wheel, clay, and kiln; kitchen and lounge, furnished with hand-me-downs, for teachers' informal talk, organized discussion or seminars and counseling with staff; library of adults' and children's books, curriculum materials; and storeroom of industrial scrounge materials, selected by an educator for their potential educational uses.

Program: Workshops presenting science, math, crafts, cooking, reading, social studies, art, music, drama and other elementary curriculum in a style that maximizes active, hands-on participation by teachers; allows them to learn new concepts at their own, adupt level; and to experience again how it feels to tackle new learning. Seminars initiated by teachers on classroom management, on ways that children's thinking differs from that of adults'.

Staff: Two full-time and three part-time master teachers. One full-time and one part-time secretary. Occasional consultants (including teachers acting as workshop instructors). Director is a former professor of early childhood education involved in "active-learning, discovery" curriculum development projects.

Decision Making: Advisory board of teachers, one from each building served, helps voice teachers' needs to the center's staff.

Participation: Free and voluntary. Teachers come after school and on Saturdays on their own time, as well as during minimum days. Courses for credit--such as a semester seminar on Piaget psychology--carry a fee.

Finance: Established with foundation funds which have now expired, the center is "institutionalized" but always vulnerable to budget cuts. Up to now, the center has been rescued by parents' and teachers' politicking.

The question is often asked, "How do teacher centers differ from the conventional school district or university inservice program and from the familiar curriculum resource/media centers?"

Advocates of the teacher center concept suggest that the center provides a continuity of space and time and a staff available to teachers to work on individual problems. This teacher assistance can be provided in the educator's classroom, in the center, or in any appropriate environment.

Many times the graduate courses at the university are geared to advancing the teacher out of the classroom, i.e., training teachers to become reading specialists, supervisors, administrators, "learning disabilities specialists", etc. This type of training is essential; however, teacher centers are dedicated to helping teachers stay in the classroom and experience their work as important, stimulating, less fragmented, and less isolated. The teacher center attempts to cultivate or nurture a total approach toward teaching and help teachers collaborate with each other.

Several teacher center directors have summarized the learning atmosphere of their center as follows:

"We try to design a learning program for teachers that is non-threatening, responsive, supportive but yet identifies major areas of concentration for the learning of the children in those teachers' classrooms. A teachers' center defines the study of children's learning as a serious, professional endeavor.

"Teachers' centers came into existance to advocate and provide for professional growth based on the personality of the teacher and the reality of the classroom. The "pioneer" teachers' centers have been modest, pragmatic, sometimes make-shift but serious.

"Teachers using teachers' centers say they need more local, practical and profound lessons to use in the classroom--lessons connected to students' lives (not just future jobs); they demand concreteness and connection. And teachers in teachers' centers aspire to a self-aware, self-correcting, self-reflecting kind of teaching: they need time for thought."

In Devaney's "Essay on Teachers' Centers." the author includes an explanation of "concreteness and connection" as follows:

"In their ongoing emphasis on 'concrete' curriculum materials, teachers' centers hark back to the voices in the curriculum development movement of the '60s who called for hands-on, 'real-life,' lesson material with which to teach the 3 R's, science, and social studies. These materials, easily adaptable to students of differing achievement levels, could be used with heterogeneous as well as homogeneous groups of students. Many teachers' centers are led by first- or second-generation leaders of those curriculum projects. These people still concentrate on inventing or adapting curriculum materials with teachers, and helping teachers make use of the potent learning experiences in nature, homes, and communities. In the teachers' centers' perspective, the curriculum development task is never-ending and must be teacher-involving, especially where there are schools operating under social mandates for desegregation, 'mainstreaming' mentally retarded into regular classrooms, or other forms of mixed-ability grouping. Such mandates create a multiplicity of learning backgrounds and styles among students, which in turn demand that a teacher continually collect, adapt, or concoct new curriculum materials to fit particular children and to help children understand and value each other. Curriculum development for such classrooms must go hand in hand with inservice, and neither can properly be conceived only in terms of rejuvenative shots from experts."

Teachers' centers offer teachers an atmosphere, time, and a place for reflective thought. Teachers need supportive, constructively critical help in imparting new ideas in their classrooms. The centers offer the teacher an opportunity to adapt and individualize curriculum materials for his/her classroom.

The teacher center legislation embraces some opportunities and some challenges. I'm sure everyone recognizes the challenge inherent in the federal stipulation concerning the composition of the teacher center policy board.

This legislation is, in my opinion, also an opportunity. The opportunity I speak of is collaboration.

Collaboration with the school district and the pre-service training institution means devising decision-making structures which are mutual but which preserve the program's independence and thus

the creditibility of the teachers' center staff with rank-and-file teachers. Joint policy making and the search for stronger incentives for teachers to participate will entail initiating or strengthening relationships with principals and other supervisory and planning staff in the district, and encouraging them to use the center as a resource for district-sponsored improvement projects. However, such collaboration cannot be understaken at the risk of destroying the center's status as a place where it's safe for teachers to admit inadequacy and to experiment without fear of being evaluated.

A very important aspect of the teacher center is what the center should teach and sponsor. The federal rules and regulations indicate:

Federal Rules & Regulations 197.9, Number 5. "A plan of operation which must include:....

(i) A statement of the special educational needs of the students to be served by teachers participating in the center and an expalantion of how those needs were determined."

This process gets to the core of providing teachers training that will meet their assessed needs. The needs assessment provides another opportunity for cooperation and collaboration. To illustrate my point. I would like to point out a few of the methods by which a needs assessment could be determined:

(1) Use existing data

(2) Conducting a survey

(3) Observation

(4) Conducting interviews

(5) Studying students

In order to determine the specific needs of students we need to know how to study them. There are many alternatives available and no one alone will provide all the answers one needs. The best strategy is to remain flexible in choosing techniques and instruments for studying students, pursuing those that are promising and fulfilling and discarding those that do not yield information of value.

In-depth needs assessment will enhance the education of students since their needs as well as teachers needs will be determined and the teacher center program will be built upon these needs.

It is apparent that the needs assessment and the programs offered in the teacher center must be continuously updated and remain responsive to the needs of all involved.

Teacher centers began as an experiment by providing a new mode for teachers' learning. They also provided new strategy: They focused on the "reachables"--teachers who felt a sense of potential and who reached for change--and used their first successes to energize slower-to-kindle colleagues. If the first generation of teacher center leaders could offer only one piece of advice to others starting new centers now, it would be: "Begin right away, even on a limited basis, to be the change you want to make."

The approach seems to be: "You can't legislate it, you can't force it, you have to work toward it. I'm more inclined to the snowball than the avalanche."

This "snowball strategy" implies a specific type of organization of a teacher center.

1. To be flexible and fast in response to teachers' daily requests, the center must be non-hierarchical in staff organization.

2. Defining its program offerings in terms of what participants give as well as what they take, the teachers' center must seek resources besides money. These could include teachers freely given time as well as district-paid released time and their volunteered advice and examples to fellow teachers as well as payment when they teach workshops.

3. Since the school district controls so many of the forces determining whether the teacher can apply what is learned in the center, teachers ought to be able to make common cause in a center with principals, curriculum supervisors, evaluators, parents and higher education personnel. Therefore, eligibility for using the center should be broadly defined, and once there, participants' status should be equal.

4. If the center's purpose is to stimulate and support professional

growth that stems from objective and earnest reflection about self-improvement, it has to set an example of thoughtful, careful growth. It can't spring full-fledged from the planners' agendas, and mature in a year.

If a new inservice program were to apply the teacher center strategy, organization, and pedagogical style with some critical but not overwhelming mass of teachers, it could reasonably expect to make good on at least two of the following objectives:

1. Energize teachers to invest themselves in new ideas and effort in return for receiving nonjudgmental, practical but thought-provoking help, including colleagues' encouragement and exchanges.

2. Gain teachers' involvement in tailoring curriculum for their own classroom and students, using an expansive, beyond-the-classroom-walls definition of what are appropriate learning materials and experiences.

3. Refresh and sustain teachers with a new and constructive "staff developer," called an advisor: a master teacher whom the teacher invites into the classroom, not to supervise or evaluate or implement a particular program but over a period of time to problem-solve, bring new ideas, demonstrate an alternative teaching style, provoke and extend the teachers thought.

4. Transcend role boundaries so that principals, supervisors, parents and education professors plan for instructional improvement along with teachers in a nonjudgmental, collaborative environment.

Teachers' centers would likely be successful if they were to incorporate the following characteristics:

1. An entirely voluntary participation of the educators.

2. Based upon student and teacher-identified needs.

3. A program which will satisfy the individual needs of teachers who come into the center seeking help.

4. The center or program is within a reasonable distance from the teachers' schools.

5. The center made available both during and after the regular workday.

6. Teachers are able to participate in the center during the regular school day.

7. Teachers feel it is their center.

The teacher center is a concept that I feel would benefit teachers, administrators and parents. I also think the bottom line of the program would be an enhanced educational program for the students, and in the final analysis that is what it is all about.

ARE TEACHER CENTERS THE ANSWER?

R. LaMar Allred, Coordinator
In-Service Staff Development
Utah State Board of Education

As I have studied the theme of this Annual Conference on Teacher Education, "Are Teacher Centers the Answer?" I am reminded of some words of counsel given me years ago by a Civics teacher after I had done rather poorly on a true-false quiz he had administered to the class. I surmise that naivete' is a characteristic of most seventh graders, at least it was in my case, but I learned a lesson from his counsel, which was: always be skeptical of questions or statements which have modifying words such as never, always, most, least, worst, etc. He also suggested that in answering controversial questions in essay examinations one should use modifying words. You can best judge at the conclusion of my remarks whether I have followed his advice.

When Superintendent Talbot designated me to serve on this panel as a representative of the agency, I hurriedly sought his audience to see if I could gain his views and ideas on the subject. I quickly found out that he was giving me great latitude in my comments but he directed one modification and that was that I was to make sure that the audience recognized that I was speaking only my personal views and not reading a policy or position paper or even words which had been approved by the State Board of Education or its administration. He did reflect one other point that I am sure you would be interested in. That was that he was again upset that federal regulations would remove the regularly vested authority from local boards of education which he felt the teacher center policy board requirement did.

PERCEPTIONS

Let me now direct my comments to some experiences that will help you evaluate my perspectives of teacher centers. In 1960, the American Institute of Biological Sciences funded a massive science curriculum project entitled, "The Biological Sciences Curriculum Project" -- BSCS --, if you please. Some of my colleagues and I were contacted by the district administration to determine our willingness to participate in a pilot project. Upon our affirmative response, the project served as a vehicle for a grass roots approach to an activity that had great resemblance to some of the concepts embodied in the teacher center philosophy. We were a small group in number but we had a

common interest and need. At least weekly we met in a setting designed to plan, train, evaluate and otherwise improve our competencies in delivering to students the concepts and experiences of this project. It was not uncommon for us to find ourselves meeting in one of our classrooms for a three or four hour session. Occasionally, we met in one of our homes and had light refreshments along with a vigorous discussion, or even went to a media center to preview slides, record tapes and other things requiring that facility. We were always meeting in the school or setting that fit the task at hand.

Following two years of piloting of this project, it was still not uncommon for my colleagues and me to be found in a setting where we again sharing ideas, discussing evaluation techniques, eliciting the names of university professors and others that we could possibly contact to gain further insight and knowledge, and just literally "rubbing shoulders", as a means of improving our teaching capabilities.

Since those experiences nearly two decades ago, it has been my opportunity to convey the personal growth that came from that experience to many educators in settings such as accreditation visits, school observations, workshops, conferences, etc.

Approximately two years ago, I had the opportunity of going to Denver, Colorado, with a group of educators from our state and one of the activities that turned out to be the highlight of that journey was a visit to the Jefferson County School District Staff Development Academy. Along with meeting a former science colleague of mine whom you will be privileged to hear as our guest luncheon speaker, I was able to see the result of an idea and a need that had been generated by a small group of educators who sought to improve themselves professionally, initially through peer training. Hopefully, without skimming the cream off of the presentation that Jim Metzdorf will be making to us, let me reflect that from that meager beginning the Staff Development Academy had grown to a facility and a program of staff development activities that was breathtaking. The local board of education and the local education association were cooperatively funding the Academy, the needs of both the educators and the district were being addressed, and there was a very obvious realization of the value of peer training on the part of both parties. Please be advised that peer training was not the only format used,

but it was a major approach.

Upon my return from that visit, I contacted one of the staff members of the state education association to discuss informally the experience and I was happy to hear the favorable reaction engendered from our conversation. Not long after this, he called to alert me to the impending federal legislation of teacher centers.

Another point I wish to include in these background comments comes from the research of a team of educators from the South Dakota State University reported in the April, 1977, issue of Educational Leadership. The title of the report was "Teachers' Preferences In and Perceptions of In-Service Education." The definition of in-service education for the report was, "individually planned and/or school-planned activities for the improvement of instruction and/or the professional development of staff members." A random sampling of teachers representing every school district in the state of South Dakota resulted in responses from over 1200 educators answering questions about their preferences and perceptions of in-service. Rather than giving a detailed report of the findings let me just say that they identified a rather exhaustive list of types of in-service education activities in their study and came up with the following conclusions:

1. The list of in-service activities itself demonstrates that there are many approaches to staff development and that some less-frequently-used approaches (for example, observation and assistance from other teachers, "Current Trends" - like workshops, and summer workshops designed around local needs that are held in the local school) should be included in staff development program planning.

2. Useful in-service education programs are planned in response to the assessed needs of teachers and build on the interests and strengths of the teachers for whom the're designed.

3. The observations substantiate the need to provide teachers with choices about whether to attend, what to focus on, when to start and what to use as a resource for professional growth.

4. More time has to be set aside for staff development--time for planning and carrying out initial staff development activities and for planning follow-up activities that help teachers extend and apply what they have learned.

5. Useful in-service experiences start with the assumption that teachers can be resources to each other and, therefore, these experiences provide opportunities for teachers to share ideas and resources with each other.

6. Teachers are more committed to staff development if they have been involved in planning and feel that they have some control over their own in-service experiences.[1]

It is interesting but not unexpected that many of the findings reported in the paper on Concepts of Teacher Centers authored by Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, that you received with your conference agenda, substantiate this South Dakota study. Joyce and Weil have included one additional element that I feel is very critical in formulating an approach to teacher centers, that is, that the centers should be "on the teachers' own turf" or as noted in another part of their report, teacher centers should be in the schools.[2]

STATE BOARD POSITION AND ROLE

Now back to my response to the question raised in the conference theme--teacher centers definitely have the potential of making a drastic change in the approach to staff development. Certainly the need is there when we look at the additional programs, philosophies and responsibilities being laid on the classroom teacher--career education, mainstreaming, reading, metrics, environmental education, middle schools, open-classrooms--the list could go on and on. Without a new approach to addressing these additional responsibilities, not only the classroom teacher, but the building administrator and the central office staff are going to be overwhelmed to the degree that we will have a generation of neurotic educators within the near future. Teacher centers have the potential for meeting all of the needs as previously mentioned in the South Dakota report. The spectrum of settings and activities which can be encompassed in a teacher center environment is perhaps without limit. The concept is an idea whose time has come.

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[1]Patricia Zigarmi, Loren Betz and Darrell Jensen, "Teachers' Preferences in and Perceptions of In-Service Education," Educational Leadership, April, 1977, pp. 545-551.

[2]Bruce R. Joyce and Marsha Weil, "Concepts of Teacher Centers, ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, May, 1973, 20 pages.

What should be the role of the state education agency regarding the total "teacher center" movement? It is my view that there are several possibilities, some of which may not even be realized at this point in time. Among them are the following:

1. Continue to act as a facilitator in the collaboration effort within the education community and assist in the determination of the roles of the university, local districts, intermediate education agencies, state education agency and community organizations.

2. Encourage the establishment of centers as the congruency of need and commitment are established within a district, school or other appropriate agency.

3. Render technical assistance to the centers upon request.

4. Disseminate successful in-service models to the centers and encourage adaptation of validated programs.

5. Formulate guidelines which may aid newly established centers in patterns of organization, strategies, evaluation and other appropriate

6. Alert centers as to the availablity of resources, both financial and personnel.

CONCERNS

You may now be thinking what are we waiting for--what is stopping us? May I submit to you a list of concerns that I feel need some resolution before teacher centers will reach anywhere near their full potential.

1. Are we really ready to collaborate? Have we learned and matured as we have gone through such programs as teacher leadership and others that without cooperation even the best of ideas can quickly be sterilized in the autoclave of politics, misunderstanding, suspicions and misconceptions?

2. Will our ideas imbody only the style of operation that Joyce and Weil refer to as "informal" or do we have the ability to also include "corporate" and "competency-oriented" levels of operation?

3. Will the politics of the teacher center policy board bury the golden egg and the federal dollars attached to it?

4. Will we be able to generate enough commitment to assure the continuation of the centers after federal funding is withdrawn?

5. Are the institutions of higher education willing both to recognize and address the in-service needs of public educators with empirical data only and will they be rapidly responsive to the immediate needs of the districts and schools?

6. Are we innovative enough to design approaches and strategies; yes, even locate sites, that will be effective and available to the rural districts of the state?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me bring you up to date on the status of teacher center proposals in Utah for funding under Public Law 94-482. Four proposals were submitted by local school districts. Logan, Salt Lake Cityand Grand Districts submitted individual proposals and a cooperative proposal was received from the Northeastern Utah Service Center. These four proposals ranged in funding requests from $95,000. to $210,000. A selected group of staff is presently reading them and making an initial evaluation, after which it appears all four of the proposals will be sent to the United States Office of Education prior to the May 1 deadline.

SUMMARY FROM THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

From LaMar Allred's session:

The question most often asked was: "What is the State Board of Education's stand on the concept of teacher centers?" (See Mr. Allred's remarks in the earlier section of these conference proceedings.)

Some other concerns surfaced in the form of the following questions:

1. How are teacher centers funded:
2. Will the state continue funding teacher centers, if federal monies run out?
3. How are centers started?
4. How does the state evaluate teacher centers:
5. How is a teacher center initiated?
6. What constitutes the organization of a teacher center?
7. Which specific guidelines for teacher centers do we follow?

A number of participants asked about details of the proposals already submitted to the State Board. Mr. Allred referred the questioners to the respective districts, e.g. Salt Lake.

From Lowell Baum's session:

The overriding question posed to Mr. Baum was, "Is this a move on the part of the NEA and AFT to take over the responsibility for curriculum development?" Mr. Baum's response was to the effect that (in his opinion) this is not the intent of the national organization; certainly it is not the intent of the Utah Educational Association. Rather, Mr. Baum pointed out, the idea is meant to provide a free and voluntary response on the part of classroom teachers to participate in activities designed to improve their teaching and thus improve the learning of their students.

Responsing to other questions, Mr. Baum made the following points:

1. A teacher center is what the participants make it; since it is for teachers, there is good reason for them to have a major voice in the

decision as to what the center will be like.

2. A teacher center is to be established on the basis of a needs assessment in the area, district or school it is to serve.

3. It is also to be based on teacher and pupil needs as rationally assessed.

4. The teacher center concept can be viewed as a great challenge for collaboration between teachers and administrators in providing better education for children.

From Superintendents Peterson's session:

Discussion seemed to center on the opposition of district administrators to the concept of teacher centers. Participants requested that Superintendent Peterson define a teacher center as envisioned by him and his colleagues. As alternative definitions were given, a fairly lively give and take ensued.

Encouraging participants to inform themselves about the notion under study, Superintendent Peterson left the impression, at least in the mind of the discussion leader for the session, that he (and possibly some other superintendents) were not opposed implacably to the concept of centers, but had serious reservations about the likely operation and control of them. Two principal areas of concern were (a) the erosion of local control of education, traceable in part to the augmented role of the federal government, and (b) the lack of comprehensive and coherent guidelines for the operation of the centers.

Several participants voiced strong support for teacher control of the centers. They felt they had a right to be in control of something that would benefit them and their students.